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14. (New) The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising a second nozzle
mounted to said hood and extending into said passageway downstream of said fill tube for
injecting a supply of gas into said pouch to purge oxygen from said pouch.

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15. (New) The apparatus as set forth in claim 13, further comprising means for
reciprocally moving said nozzle in a vertical direction to move said nozzle into and away
from said pouch.

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16. (New) The apparatus as set forth in claim 12, wherein said hood further
comprises a collar extending around said fill tube and fluidly connected to said supply of gas,
said collar delivering a supply of gas around said fill tube.

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17. (New) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said means for moving comprises a
turret.

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18. (New) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said means for dispersing
comprises a dispersion plate mounted to said hood and having a plurality of perforations.

REMARKS

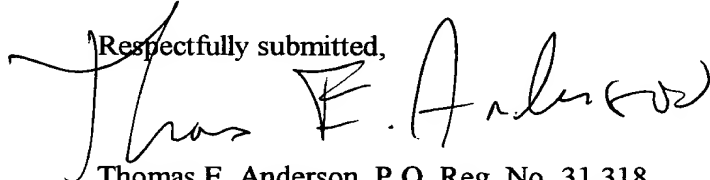
Applicant has amended the application to more particularly set forth Applicant's invention. New claim 12 has been submitted setting forth the limitations of claim 7 in independent form. The Examiner has indicated that claim 7 would be allowable if set forth in independent form. Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 6. The Examiner rejected claim 6 on the basis of Wakabayashi et al. in view of Burton et al. Applicant, respectfully, requests reconsideration of this rejection.

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Applicant has also included limitations which define Applicant's invention to include a plurality of stations, including at least one station upstream of the hood when the pouch is open. Thus disclosed is a unitary process in which a pouch is loaded, opened, filled under the hood and ready for shipment. Such an apparatus is not taught, disclosed or suggested by any of the prior art references. Accordingly, Applicant, respectfully, requests reconsideration of the rejection under 35 USC 103 and allowance of the claims.

If the Examiner has any questions regarding this application, Applicant's attorney may be reached at (248) 647-6000.

Respectfully submitted,




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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8(a)

I hereby certify that this correspondence and any attachments are being sent to the United States Patent Office via first class mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on this 15 day of

June, 2000.



Bonnie A. Clack

